

Hillcrest School

School Information 2017-18



Head Teacher **Mrs A Mead MA BA (Hons), NPQH**

Chair of Governors **Mrs J Reid**

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Welcome to Hillcrest School

Dear Parents and Carers,

On behalf of the Governors, Staff and Pupils may I warmly welcome you to Hillcrest School. The information in this prospectus has been written to give current and future parents all that you will need to know about Hillcrest School.

Hillcrest school is a non- residential Special School for 84 children aged 11 to 19 years with complex needs;

- ⇒ Autistic Spectrum Condition,
- ⇒ Social, Emotional and Mental Health,
- ⇒ Cognition & Learning
- ⇒ Communication & Interaction
- ⇒ Speech, Language and Communication needs.

At Hillcrest School we are committed to providing high quality education for all our pupils. We strive to create a community of learners where everyone feels valued in a welcoming, supportive and safe environment, based on unconditional positive regard. We are a highly motivated staff team dedicated to help your child learn and achieve.

We believe firmly in working closely in partnership with you, other professionals and the wider community to ensure the best outcomes for your child.

Prospective parents are welcome to arrange a visit to discuss their child and our provision at Hillcrest.

Mission Statement

“Aiming High: dream, believe, achieve”

We believe in, and strive to create, a community of learners where everyone feels valued in a welcoming, supportive and safe environment, based on unconditional positive regard.

When students leave Hillcrest School, they should be more resilient, confident, responsible, independent, respectful and life-long learners.

Our Aims

- To provide the highest standards of teaching and learning through setting challenging educational experiences that recognise everyone’s potential from their own starting point and building on their success.
- To encourage a community of learners with positive attitudes to learning.
- To promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, where students have a voice in the school and their views are sought and listened to.
- To encourage high standards of behaviour where students are encouraged to manage their own behaviour, take responsibility for it and recognise that actions have consequences.
- To build strong partnerships with parents and carers.

Hillcrest Big 5 Key Drivers

Social Development & Communication

Emotional Health & Well-being

Academic Achievement

Functionality

Aspirational Futures

Hillcrest Expects...



Good Listening



Kind Words



Care of Hillcrest



Look after each other

Curriculum Offer

A unique curriculum for our unique learners

Hillcrest school aims to offer the broad and balanced delivery of the National Curriculum. It is imperative that all our learners are fully equipped for adulthood and are able to use skills, knowledge and understanding in a way that is functional to them.

The holistic approach to learning is supported further by the expert practitioners that deliver as much of the curriculum as possible to their pastoral groups. This has enhanced cross-curricular links and made target setting and assessment seamless.

Many of our learners have problems accessing large parts of the National Curriculum, caused by a combination of factors: poor literacy or numeracy skills; limited concentration; problems with interaction with other pupils, and a general lack of confidence and self-esteem. There is simply little point therefore, in attempting to replicate the lesson content and teaching approaches that have failed in the past to motivate these pupils.

The curriculum is differentiated for individual pupils according to need and this may be through content, delivery, support and expected outcomes.

Academic achievement is incredibly important here at Hillcrest. We have aspirational expectations of all the students and are keen to ensure they feel equipped and suitably prepared for the next stage in their education. Although we would like all of our learners to fulfil national qualifications such as GCSEs and A-levels the examinations have been detrimental to the progress our learners have made and there has been an impact on their wellbeing. We therefore offer functional and entry level qualifications. The chosen routes allows a learner to demonstrate their ability against a curriculum that will robustly assess their functionality in becoming an independent adult.

Our Classes

In Hillcrest we group learners by dynamics and needs. Unlike traditional/mainstream schooling we don't cluster learners by year groups.

We do attempt to group children within key stages to support their social and emotional development but staff at Hillcrest spend a long time arranging and placing learners in classes.

6th Form

Some of our learners decide to stay with us into 6th form rather than go to college or apprenticeships.

Our 6th form learners have their own uniform and a purpose built lodge on the perimeter of the school site.

The role of 6th form is to further enhance the independent living opportunities for those learners that need it.

The 6th form also supports further accreditation routes.

KS3 Offer

Focus & Reflection

CLL

PSRN

KUW

EAD

PPSED

Enrichment

KS4/6th Form Offer

Focus & Reflection

OCR English

OCR Maths

OCR Science

OCR Entry Level ICT/
Computer Science

Artsmark Explore

ASDAN WKS/AOPE

D of E

OCR Employability &
Work Experience

PPSED

CLL-communication, language and literacy

We refer to English as CLL. This is because we recognise the importance in the varying aspects of effective communication, the building and understanding of language and the practice of literacy skills. Taught sessions will:

- Develop reading skills- phonics & comprehension
- Develop hand writing and confidence in writing composition-inc. grammar
- Developing vocabulary-reading and spelling
- Developing clear speech & articulation
- Facilitating opportunities to apply these skills
- Drama and role-play
- Deconstructing, constructing and sharing texts
- Foster a love of reading & reading for purpose—accessing the school library and e-readers.

PSRN-problem solving, reasoning and numeracy

The core of learning in maths will happen in PSRN. The aim is for children to develop functional mathematical knowledge to support them in being independent in society. Sessions will explore:

- Numbers and calculations
- Decimals, percentages and ratio
- Measurement
- Data handling and statistics
- Geometry
- Algebra

The skills developed in these sessions will be built into real life scenarios (problem solving) for pupils to apply knowledge. PSRN should build confidence in maths to aid independent liv-

EAD- Expressive art and design

EAD blends all the creative arts in a way that staff can merge and incorporate an array of artistic interests. EAD allows pupils to explore:

- Art-graphics & understanding of colour
- Photography— using emerging technologies
- Design technology-manipulating materials

The weighting of these areas will depend wholly on the group of students.

KUW- Knowledge and understanding of the world

KUW is developed from the natural awe and wonder that students have. It will build upon the sciences and humanities to wrap a focus into a topic (thematic) in which learning has clear purpose and answers questions. Students will:

- Explore geographical features
- Reflect upon historical events
- Build cultural awareness and diversity

The topic approach allows a multitude of layers to the learning experiences making stronger links. Students will maximise the opportunity to enrich knowledge, skills and understanding through out of class learning.

Science

Science is taught across discrete units in the specific areas of biology, chemistry and physics. The focus is determined by the national curriculum expectations and exam board criteria/foci of study. All science lessons would include:

- Carrying out scientific enquiries
- Developing scientific knowledge

ITC-Information Technology & Computing

ITC allows our learners to explore and harness current and emerging technology. The curriculum covers software, applications, hardware, programming and e-safety inc. digital footprints.

Home Economics/ Craft

The learners at Hillcrest really enjoy cooking and food technology. We have incorporated this into home economics so that all learners have the opportunity to cook, work with textiles and manage a home environment independently.

Music

Our music curriculum is developed from the 'Charnaga' scheme of work. It explores the entire content of the national curriculum with opportunities for staff to enhance this further.

THRIVE

Thrive specifically addresses whole school approaches to children's emotional wellbeing and development. It absolutely supports and enhances prevention, early identification and intervention strategies. It also works in partnership with parents/carers.

PPSED-Physical, personal, social and emotional development

Making healthy lifestyle choices and keeping safe is imperative for learners in Hillcrest. PPSED merges several subjects in a more holistic approach. These are:

- Physical Education-strength, dexterity and motor skill development
- Personal Development-SRE & relationships, health & hygiene
- Social Development-communication skills, developing listening and strong social attributes
- Emotional development-focussing on self-worth and managing feelings

Admissions Policy

Children are referred for specialist provision at Hillcrest following assessments made by a number of professionals, as well as contributions from parents and carers. To be considered for a place at Hillcrest pupils will have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or one will be in the process of being prepared for them.

Written referrals will be sent to the Head Teacher by the Local Authority in order for the school to consider whether the Child's educational needs can be met at Hillcrest.

Parents considering Hillcrest for their children are always welcome to visit, to see our facilities and talk to staff about the educational opportunities we are able to provide.

Any visit does not constitute an offer of a place.

Annual Reviews of Education, Health and Care plans

Annual Reviews, Transitional Reviews (Yr 9 and Yr11) and EHC Transition Meetings are held in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice, to review progress and to ensure that the child's needs are being met and the school placement remains appropriate. Pupils are involved in the review process as much as possible.

Management of Behaviour

At Hillcrest we expect high standards of behaviour, which are both socially acceptable and show care and consideration for others.

We practice a positive approach to discipline. By this we emphasise and reward good behaviour in a variety of ways. These include praise, merits, phone calls home, worker of the week, certificates of achievement and Head Teacher's certificates.

Challenging behaviour is managed through a traffic light system throughout the school. Most children can successfully change their behaviour following a warning. Those who do not will be required to catch up the missed learning time. Where a child's behaviour is deemed as extreme, as in causing harm to themselves or others, staff members are legally required to physically intervene. All staff have specialist training to support in the de-escalation of challenging behaviour quickly and this is renewed annually.

Hillcrest staff recognise the important role that parents and carers have in ensuring a successful time in Hillcrest and as such communicate on a regular basis with those at home.

Reporting to Parents

Parents/carers will receive an annual report about the progress of their child in the summer term, describing the children's progress and experiences in all subject areas, and contributing to the EHCPs which may take place at any time through the school year.

Assessment takes the form of teacher assessment. Staff closely monitor and track pupil progress with results fed back to parents in the annual pupil report and EHCP meetings.

In Hillcrest we use an assessment system called iASEND, which has been specially developed to track the progress of learners with SEND. Staff assess half termly and use the data to stretch and further personalise pupil's learning. Accredited courses studied by older pupils offer a further opportunity to monitor progress.

ANTI BULLYING

Within this school, staff are very aware of the vulnerability of some children and it is our aim to create a secure and safe environment for the pupils in our care.

Hillcrest have achieved the anti-bullying accreditation from the exemplary work to tackle bullying and attitudes to peers.

Possible sign and symptoms of bullying:

- Increasing lack of confidence
- Refusal to attend school
- Frequently late for the school bus or running away from the premises
- Frequently complaining of tummy upsets, headaches etc.
- Moodiness.
- Clothing or belongings sometimes torn or damaged

At Hillcrest any pupil suspected of bullying is monitored very closely in lessons and during recreation time. The system we operate is based on a three tier sanction system. More details of this policy can be found on our website or a copy can be requested from the office.

Sex Education

At Hillcrest we ensure that the sex education given to the pupils at our school, will be delivered in such a manner as to encourage our pupils to have due regard to moral consideration and the value of family life.

Sex Education is taught throughout the school in accordance with National Curriculum Guidelines, with modifications relating to our pupils' individual needs.

Any parents wishing to discuss the content of the curriculum can do with the form tutor of their child's class.

E-Safety

We recognise the value of the Internet as both a learning tool and a method of social interaction. We are, however, very aware of the potential dangers it brings.

Internet safety is a whole school responsibility – staff, pupils and parents

Young people may expose themselves to danger, both knowingly and unknowingly, when using the internet and other technologies. Additionally young people could become involved in activities which are inappropriate or possibly illegal. We therefore recognise our responsibility to educate our pupils, teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the internet and related technologies.

In school we have safeguarding procedures and protocol that is expected of all staff and students. Furthermore we have a specific filtering tool that maintains our highest trust in what can be accessed through the school.

We urge parents to be vigilant and monitor their children's use of this valuable technology to ensure their safety outside of school. Any support in setting parental controls can be offered within school.

Worker of the week

The Form Teacher selects a pupil each week that deserves recognition for consistent good behaviour or a significant improvement. The winner is announced in Assembly and given an Achiever of the Week Certificate and an item from the Prize Box

Star of the week and crunchie nominations

These are also awarded in our celebration assembly when individual efforts are recognised and celebrated. Everyone in Hillcrest can vote for any student or staff for exceptional effort or recognition of what they do in Hillcrest.

Enrichment

It is important that all aspects of learning lead to enrichment in each students life and encourages them to lead a healthy and positive future. Staff are keen to plan and source opportunities that take learning out of the classroom and into real life contexts.

Reward System Merits

Hillcrest offer merits so that each class are working towards there agreed rewards. Staff agree the expectations and reward each learner meeting these. The rewards have been used for individual interests or whole class rewards.

Skills 4 U & Engage

Skills4U & Engage are alternative education providers that Hillcrest uses to bridge the gap from school to college. The Sixth Form and some Year 11's pupils access this provision. They offer training facilities in realistic working environments transferring learning to community based projects.

Attendance at Skills 4U & Engage gives students the chance to learn practical skills, which will benefit them both now and in the future.

Work Experience

Work experience is considered to be a vitally important part of our careers education programme.

Finding specific work placements can be difficult for many children but within school we offer a range of work experience opportunities. For those that require specific experiences staff will attempt to source and maintain strong partnerships to facilitate this.

Intervention Team

Hillcrest is fortunate enough to have an intervention team specially for the learners attending here. The intervention team works from referrals made from the teaching teams or as rapid response following personal incidents.

The team consists of:

- ♦ Speech and language Therapist
- ♦ Occupational Therapist
- ♦ Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
- ♦ Autism specialist teacher

Emergency closures

Very occasionally it may become necessary to close the school at very short notice e.g. for severe weather, heating failure etc. Any closure will be notified to Radio Newcastle and is often broadcast between 7.00 and 8.30am. We aim to get school closure information onto the Northumberland County Council website as soon as we can. We have an electronic emergency contact system in school to send text messages to parents, if you do not have a mobile number a voice message will be left on your home phone.

It is very important that the school has details of emergency contact names and telephone numbers to ensure that there is someone available to accept your child, in the event that the school has to close early.

We shall try to keep our school open at all times, but if we do need to close in an emergency this will be for the safety of both children and staff and sometimes it is because of a decision the school transport. We use Teachers to Parents text system.

Smoking

Hillcrest School operates a Smoke Free Policy throughout the school building and in the school grounds, including the car parks. Thank you for supporting this policy.

SCHOOL HOURS

Pupils arrive on transport provided by the LEA for 8.50am

Pupils who travel independently or who are brought by their parents **should not arrive before 8.45am** as staff are only available to supervise pupils from 8.45am.

Focus	8.45 - 9.30
Lesson 1	9.30 - 10.20
Break	10.20 - 10.35
Lesson 2	10.35 - 11.25
Lesson 3	11.25- 12.15
Lunch	12.15– 12.55
Lesson 3	13.00- 13.45
Activity Time	13.45—14.00
Lesson 4	14.00—14.50
Home Time	14.50 Pupil's go to allocated rooms awaiting Transport home.

LUNCH TIME

School meals are cooked on the premises. Dinner money should be paid to the school office by cash or cheque on a weekly or termly basis. Parents may apply to the Local Authority for free school meals. However if you prefer, children may bring a healthy packed lunch.

Pupils are provided a menu each morning and can order what they would like for their lunch. The menu always has a variety of choices to ensure most diets are catered for. Pupils do not need to have a school dinner every day but can change between packed lunches and dinners to suit the menu if required.



Governors

Chair of Governors	Mrs J Reid
Vice Chair of Governors	Mrs A Avery

The Governing Body are committed stakeholders who have an active and supportive role at Hillcrest. They have a solid vision for the school so that children achieve the very best they can.

A file containing the Agenda and Minutes of the Governing Body is held at the school and may be viewed in term time by arrangement.

The governors have their own section on the school website which contains more information about members, their specialist areas and their newsletters.

The Friends of Hillcrest Association

The Friends of Hillcrest are members of the National Confederation of Parent and Teacher Association. The group consists of parents and community members who raise funds and offer additional opportunities for the learners at Hillcrest.

Together the aim is to raise funds, through various events, in order to be able to provide extra educational resources for the benefit of all the children of the school.

If you would like more information, or to become a member please contact the School Office.



Attendance

A high attendance rate is essential if your child is to achieve the maximum benefit from the curriculum at Hillcrest. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to inform the school and the transport contractor if their child will not be attending school.

If your child is absent from school, please ensure that you telephone the school as early as possible. Any child, who returns to school after an absence and the school has not been notified, will have their absence recorded as **unauthorised**.

Attendance is closely monitored by staff at Hillcrest. Learners falling below 90% will be closely monitored and if required the school will ask for additional support from Mrs J Malloy, Education Welfare Officer.

If your child has a gastrointestinal illness please keep him/her off for 48 hours after the last time they were sick/had diarrhoea.

In common with all other schools from September 2013 it will not be possible to authorise any absences from school for family holidays – unless there are extreme circumstances. As such any holidays taken in term time will be classed as unauthorised absence. Holidays should therefore be taken during designated school holidays wherever possible

Safety/Security

The school is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all and regularly assesses the security procedures in place. The site is protected by a perimeter fence and any learners in any of the outdoor learning areas are closely supervised.

The main entrance door operates on a keypad and a video monitor/ intercom system. Visitors must notify the office in advance of any visits and office staff will take relevant copies of any ID or ensure they are received by the relevant parties on arrival.

The entire school premises are monitored by a CCTV system for security and safety reasons-this would only be accessed as part of any safeguarding concerns.

Medical Issues

Arrangements in case of accident or illness

It is essential that emergency telephone numbers and/or work numbers are kept up to date.

Should a pupil become ill whilst at school, every attempt will be made to contact parents/guardians.

In the event of a serious accident or illness involving pupils, they will be transported to hospital either by car or ambulance, whichever is appropriate, and the parent/guardian informed immediately so that they can meet us at the hospital.

Medicines in School

School must be informed of all medication taken regularly by the child. Any to be dispensed during school time must be clearly labelled in original packaging. Medication must be handed in at the school office, via the bus escort or person bringing the child to school. Parents are asked to keep us informed of any change to medication. .

First Aid Persons

The majority of support staff at Hillcrest hold current First Aid Certificates. Pupils with minor injuries are treated in school and pupils' names, details of injury and treatment is recorded on our internal database. Serious incidents must also be recorded on the County Accident forms.

Charging Policy

The school does not charge for activities other than those for which the local authority invoices the school, or for which direct charges are made (e.g. residential trips to field study centres). ***However, parents are often asked if they can make a contribution to both regular and occasional activities such as cookery, swimming sessions or visits to places of educational interest.***

Indeed without such contributions many such activities might not be possible. Please note however, that no student will be prevented from taking part in any event if the parent is unable to provide a financial contribution.

The school has its own mini-bus which is used for a wide variety of functions and visits but is largely maintained by ourselves and fund-raising events are a very necessary part of subsidising additional activities. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in fund raising. We have been pleased in the past to have had much valued support and co-operation from parents, other groups and individuals and we hope that this will continue in the future.

Uniform

We are aware of the high cost of clothing today and therefore we have introduced a uniform that is as simple and practical as possible.

Dark trousers

Dark sensible footwear

The school sells hoodies and polo tops that are coloured specifically to which part of the school your child attends. The main school wear blue and the 6th form green. The school aims to provide all sizes and can order specific sizes if there is not any in stock.

PE Kit

All children should come to school with a suitable change of clothing for P.E.

The PE kit can be any comfortable sportswear your child owns-trainers that are suitable for both indoor and outdoor activities are recommended.

A student's clothing should be clearly labelled with his or her name in order to save confusion over items. This is particularly important with items of clothing that are changed during the school day e.g. games kit.

Jewellery should not be worn by students in school.

Students who do wear jewellery expose themselves and others to the risk of injury, particularly during practical lessons where machinery or apparatus is used and also during physical education activities. Reasonable exceptions to the rule that jewellery should not be worn might include the wearing of inexpensive watches and the use of 'sleepers' by students who have pierced ears. However both of these items must be removed during games and PE lessons.

Personal Property

Children should not bring expensive items of personal property to school. The school cannot guarantee the safety of such items and the Local Authority cannot accept any responsibility for the loss or theft of pupils' personal property. Mobile phones, iPods, MP3 players etc. are not allowed in school.

Hillcrest School discourages pupils from bringing mobile phones to school but recognises some parents, especially those with children who travel independently, regard access to a phone as a safety tool. Pupils who bring mobile phones to school should hand them in to staff during the registration period and they will be returned at the end of the school day.

If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone, of either other pupils or staff, this will be regarded as a serious offence and may result in disciplinary action. If images of pupils or staff have been taken, the phone will not be returned until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a senior member of staff.

On health and safety grounds **Aerosol sprays are NOT ALLOWED in school.**

The only drinks allowed in school are Milk and Water.

Exclusions

In extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour it may become necessary to exclude a pupil. This may be for a fixed period of time up to 45 days in any one year. Parents/guardians of pupils who have been excluded must attend a formal meeting where a behaviour contract will be drawn up before they are allowed back to school. The contract is a binding document signed by the Head Teacher, teacher, pupil and parent. It stipulates the conditions the pupil must adhere to and the help which they will receive. Parents/guardians have the right to appeal against exclusion.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Under the 2016 policy from the Department for Education schools play a key part in ensuring the safety of children in their care.

Our designated safeguarding leads are:

Andrea Mead (Headteacher)

Mark Phillips (Deputy Headteacher)

Alison Miller (Assistant Head/6th Form Lead)

Complaints

We very much value our open door policy and friendly relationships with the families of our pupils, we encourage parents to talk with us informally to raise matters of concern with either the relevant member of staff or the Head Teacher. This enables us to be aware of any problems and work together to find a solution.

Complaints are usually resolved at this stage; however there is a written Complaints Procedure in place; details of which are available from the school office.

School Health Service - Data Protection

For many years schools and the School Health Service have worked together to ensure that all children in school are offered immunisation, health and dental surveillance, advice and support. To do this School Health & Dental Services need a population database – an up-to-date list of all children attending school. These are used to provide programmes, including immunisation against tuberculosis (BCG) and meningitis C and dental, hearing and vision screening.

In response to changes in the Data Protection Act we are required to ensure that parents know that the school gives your child's name, address and date of birth to the School Health and Dental Services for this purpose.



This information will be shared unless you advise the Head Teacher in writing that you do not wish this to happen.

Please note that no immunisation is carried out without a signed consent form from the parent or guardian.